

US 70 Corridor Committee
North Carolina Board of Transportation
Wednesday, June 5, 2013
Meeting Summary

The scheduled meeting of the US 70 Corridor Committee of the North Carolina Board of Transportation was held on Wednesday, June 5, 2013 in the Emergency Information Center (EIC) of the Transportation Building in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Call to Order

Chair Gus Tulloss called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m. with the following members present: Hugh Overholt, Ferrell Blount, Jim Crawford and DOT Staff Contact Rob Hanson. Other guests and staff in attendance included:

M. Durwood Stephenson	US 70 Corridor Commission – Executive Director
Steve Keen	Wayne County Commissioner/US 70 Corridor Commission
J. Mac Daughety	Lenoir County Commissioner/US 70 Corridor Commission
Frank Price	Johnston County/ US 70 Corridor Commission
Jamie Shern	NCDOT – Environmental Program Manager
Debbie Barbour	NCDOT – Director of Preconstruction
Greg Thorpe	NCDOT – Manager of Project Development and Environmental Analysis Unit
Mike Bruff	NCDOT – Manager of Transportation Planning Branch
Neil Lassiter	NCDOT – Division 2 Engineer
John Rouse	NCDOT – Division 4 Engineer
Ray McIntyre	NCDOT – Manager STIP Unit Eastern Region
Derrick Lewis	NCDOT – Feasibility Studies Unit Head

Shane York

NCDOT – Feasibility Studies

Matthew Potter

NCDOT – Project Development and Environmental
Analysis Unit

Brooks Rainey Pearson

Southern Environmental Law Center

Introduction

Mr. Tulloss thanked the meeting attendees for their presence at the US 70 Committee meeting. He acknowledged former Chair, and Board Member, Ms. McNairy's hard work and dedication to the US 70 Corridor Committee and noted his gratitude for being selected as Chair of the US 70 Corridor Committee. He reflected on the coalescence of the vision for eastern North Carolina transportation and infrastructure since the initial meeting of the US 70 Subcommittee in April, 2011.

Mr. Tulloss welcomed Mr. Blount and Mr. Crawford to the committee. Everyone present gave self-introductions with a brief synopsis of their title and organization.

Mr. Hanson noted that former Chair, Mrs. McNairy had a preference of keeping meeting minutes for the US 70 Corridor Committee meetings and asked if the new committee would like to continue the use of meeting minutes or rely on meeting handouts for documentation. Mr. Tulloss noted a preference to continue with meeting minutes for documentation purposes.

US 70 Commission Overview

Mr. Stephenson also gave a brief overview of the US 70 Corridor Commission. The Commission is comprised of representatives from 5 counties (Carteret, Craven, Johnston, Lenoir, and Wayne). Each county is allotted 4 appointments each, for a total of 20 members. The Commission's ultimate goal is to promote and create a US 70 Freeway from I-40 to Morehead City that will aid in the revitalization of eastern North Carolina's economy.

Mr. Stephenson provided a list of 6 priority projects (for the revitalization of eastern NC) that have been prioritized by the Eastern NC MPO & RPO Coalition. The list identified the MPO & RPO's represented in the coalition as well as a description of the 6 projects.

Mr. Stephenson also talked about the Commission's recent agreement with Cambridge Systematics, Inc. for a US 70 Economic Impact Study. A steering committee will be developed to help guide the economic study. The committee will be comprised of one representative from each county and town, and one member from the Farm Bureau. The committee will be chaired by former NC Governor James G. Martin. It is anticipated

that the committee will meet 3 times (once during the first month, once at the end of 3rd month, and once at the end of 6th month).

Steve King discussed the I-795 to I-40 connector including its importance to the region and its support.

Funded US 70 Bypasses

Goldsboro Bypass (R-2554)

- Mr. Hanson reported that construction is underway for all Sections.
- Estimated completion is summer 2015, based on current production schedule.

Kinston Bypass (R-2553)

- Mr. Hanson announced that Project Manager, Mr. Mark Pierce has left NCDOT to accept a position with a private engineering firm. Mr. Ted Devens is assisting as interim project manager.
- The project is utilizing upgraded GIS environmental information for alternative analysis. Field checks of data obtained through GIS modeling have shown positive results.
- Currently working on functional designs for each detailed study alternative. Functional design will include bridging decisions (as agreed upon by the Merger Team) for streams and wetlands.
- The Merger Team will meet June 13, 2013 to discuss how upcoming reports should be formatted. Since this is a GIS pilot project, the technical reports will need to be somewhat different than other projects.
- A Local Officials Meeting is anticipated in late 2013.

Havelock Bypass (R-1015)

- Mr. Hanson told the committee that project development is in the middle of the FEIS process.
- Due to US Forest Service property impacts a more extensive protected species survey is required. In addition to listed Endangered Species typically reviewed for any project, Proposed, Endangered and Threatened Sensitive (PETS) surveys are required.
- A Biological Assessment for the Red Cockaded Woodpecker is currently underway.

- The current schedule is for right of way acquisition in FY 2014 and Construction in FY 2016.
- Neil Lassiter noted that public comments relating to the recent US 70 median project have relented. He stated the local community would like to see the Havelock Bypass proceed as soon as possible.
- Mr. Overholt asked about US Forest Service coordination on the project. Mr. Hanson stated Forest Service reviews will be needed for upcoming reports and analysis. NCDOT is currently working on these deliverables.

Other US 70 Corridor Upgrades

US 70 Improvements near Wilson's Mill in Johnston County (W-5600)

- Mr. Hanson specified that the project is in the early stages of the environmental planning process.
- There are currently no funds for right of way or construction, but planning studies are underway in case funds are identified in the future.
- Mr. Hanson indicated that the study will include a review of a full freeway design. However; the project scope will not eliminate all intersections. The two existing signals will be replaced with interchanges.

US 70 Improvements near Pine Level in Johnston County (W-5107)

- John Rouse explained that right of way acquisition is currently underway. It will take some time to complete due to the relocation of several businesses, residents, and two graveyards.
- Construction is scheduled for February 2015.

US 70 improvements at Slocum Gate in Havelock, Craven County (R-5516)

- Matthew Potter gave a brief overview of the project and a progress report.
- The project will help improve access to MCAS Cherry Point, via the Slocum Road Gate.
- Impacts will include relocation of entrance to MacDonald Downs neighborhood. Access will be relocated to Pine Grove Road, and the intersection of Pine Grove Road and US 70 will be upgraded to accommodate additional traffic.

- The second Citizens Informational Workshop is scheduled for June 25, 2012. A Local Officials Meeting will be held prior to the workshop.
- Mr. Potter noted that local support of the project is good and NCDOT staff will continue coordination with the City of Havelock, Craven County, and MCAS Cherry Point.
- The environmental document is on schedule to be completed fall 2013. Right of way acquisition is scheduled for early 2014 and construction in FY 2015.

US 70 improvements in the Town of Beaufort (Carteret County) including Gallants Channel Bridge Replacement (R-3307)

- Mr. Hanson explained that the project Let has been delayed until January 2014, due to complications with obtaining necessary US Coast Guard permits.
- US Coast Guard has required NCDOT to gather data regarding the mast heights of watercraft that traverse the area where the bridge is proposed. Vessel survey data gathering will continue through June. A Navigational Study will be completed and forwarded to the US Coast Guard this summer.
- The project continues to have support locally. A majority of the right of way has been purchased.

Feasibility Studies

- Derrick Lewis indicated a detailed feasibility study is underway for a possible new location section of US 70 extending around James City to the Havelock area. The study is expected to be complete in 2014.
- A feasibility study is also underway for the widening of existing US 70 causeway between Morehead City and Beaufort. The study is expected to be completed in early 2014.
- The feasibility study for upgrades to NC 241 in Duplin and Lenoir Counties is also underway. The final report is expected to be completed in late 2013/ early 2014.

The US 70 Committee meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.